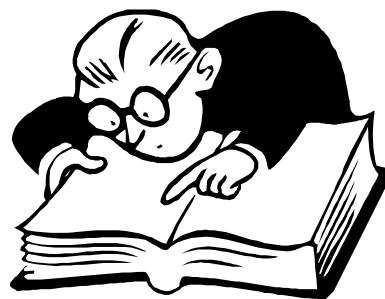


*Missouri's Foster & Adoptive Families are making...*

# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

*Volume 3, Issue 3, Winter 2004*

## Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities



The passage of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 offered important new help to young people transitioning from foster care. In addition, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001 added a sixth purpose to the Chafee program and in FY 2003, Congress appropriated \$42 million for payments to states to implement the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program. These statutory changes to the Chafee program provide additional resources to make available vouchers for youth to receive post-secondary education and training.

Youth may receive up to the lesser of the total cost of attendance or \$5,000, per year. A year is defined as a twelve (12) month period beginning with the month the youth is enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program. The cost of attendance includes:

- Tuition and fees,
- Room and Board for Aftercare youth and youth between the ages of 21-23,
- Rental or purchase of required equipment, materials or supplies (including a computer),
- Allowance for books, supplies, transportation, etc.,
- Special study projects.

### Eligibility Requirements for ETV Program:

- Youth currently eligible for Chafee services.
- Youth who were adopted from foster care after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Youth participating in a higher education program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday shall remain eligible until age 23, provided they are making satisfactory progress as defined by the Children's Division.
- Youth must have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Youth must demonstrate academic success or motivation in school (generally a "C" average or its equivalency or as otherwise agreed upon with the plan) or in training program.
- Youth must be accepted to an accredited or pre-accredited public or non-profit college/university and vocational school or certified training program.
- Appropriate scholarships, grants and other financial assistance must be explored and utilized.
- There must be reasonable assurance the youth will graduate from the educational or training program.

Eligible youth may apply for post-secondary education/training assistance by completing the Chafee Education and Training Voucher application. This application is currently available only through the Independent Living Program Specialist. It will be coming soon to the Chafee web site at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/dfs/chafee/index.htm>. The youth must complete the application and return it to their Case Manager or ILP Specialist in order to be considered.



### About Rashawn

Rashawn, an energetic creative and pretty African American young lady, who enjoys singing, dancing and being the center of attention. Although she can be shy upon introductions, she quickly warms up, allowing others to enjoy her constant smile and laugh.

For the 2003-2004 school year, Rashawn will be in the 8th grade. Rashawn enjoys the social aspect of school.

Rashawn is a healthy young girl.

Rashawn has five half-siblings. Rashawn has occasional contact with one.

Rashawn is in need of a loving, caring permanent family who is willing to provide a large amount of structure, and is willing and able to do what it takes to meet her many needs.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Announcements</i>	3
<i>News from Around the State</i>	4 & 5
<i>Partnership, Association &amp; Coalition News</i>	6 & 7
<i>Legislation</i>	8
<i>Support Groups/Training Opportunities</i>	9
<i>Foster and Adoption Resources</i>	10
<i>USDA Scholarship Information</i>	11 & 12

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PLEASE NOTE:

INFORMATION and ARTICLES for the SPRING EDITION  
of *FAMILY CONNECTIONS* is DUE TO  
THE ADOPTION EXCHANGE by APRIL 10, 2004

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 34th National Education Conference National Foster Parent Association

Orlando Florida

May 10 to 15, 2004

Adam's Mark Hotel

For more information: [WWW.NFPAinc.org](http://WWW.NFPAinc.org) Phone: 800-557-5238

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### Citizens for Missouri's Children

#### Health Policy Analyst and Child Welfare Policy Analyst

We are accepting resumes for the health policy analyst position. A short description follows. Resumes and inquiries should be sent to Ruth Ehresman, policy director, 314.647.2003 X 202 or [ruth@mokids.org](mailto:ruth@mokids.org).

The Health Policy Analyst will be responsible for researching issues related to the children's access to quality health care, identifying best practices, and promoting these with the legislative and executive branches of the Missouri government. Although primary work will be done at the State level, research and advocacy will also be directed to the federal level as needed. The Policy Analyst will interface with the private sector and local communities to create sound public policy that assures every child has access to the dental, mental and physical health care he/she needs, and will mobilize them to take action in the public policy arena. In conjunction with other staff, the Policy Analyst will participate in developing long and short range policy goals, as well as strategies to achieve these. The Policy Analyst must have the desire to work as a member of a team.

Citizens for Missouri's Children is a part of the Fostering Results Initiative. This 10 state partnership seeks to improve the court's handling of child abuse and neglect cases and to improve federal funding for child welfare services. As part of this initiative, we are hiring a child welfare policy analyst. Resumes and inquiries should be sent to Ruth Ehresman, policy director, 314.647.2003 X 202 or [ruth@mokids.org](mailto:ruth@mokids.org).

The Child Welfare Policy Analyst will be responsible for researching issues related to the child welfare system, identifying best practices, and promoting these with the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the Missouri government. Although primary work will be done at the State level, research and advocacy will also be directed to the federal level as needed. The Policy Analyst will interface with the private sector and local communities to create sound public policy to prevent and treat the effects of child abuse and neglect, and will mobilize them to take action in the public policy arena. In conjunction with other staff, the Policy Analyst will participate in developing long and short range policy goals, as well as strategies to achieve these. The Policy Analyst must have strong communication skills, and the desire to work as a member of a team.

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### North American Council on Adoptable Children 30th Anniversary Conference "30 Years of Celebrating Families"

July 28 – 31, 2004

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Hyatt Regency

Info: [info@nacac.org](mailto:info@nacac.org)



#### Meet Ariel

Ariel is artistic and creative. Art is one of her favorite classes in school. She likes drawing and making crafts. On the weekends she enjoys playing outside, playing board games but playing dress-up is one of her favorite activities. Like most girls her age she does her hair in various styles and enjoys painting her fingernails. Pink is often her color of choice because it is the color of her birthstone, opal. "Harry Potter" is her favorite movie.

Ariel has taken some time to consider what she wants in the future. In addition to having an adoptive family she would also like to pursue a singing career.

Termination of Parental Rights has occurred and she is available for adoption.

Ariel has a strong desire to be a part of a family that would provide her with guidance, love, patience and understanding. She would do best in a family without younger children.

# NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

## Northwest Region (Area 1)

We have had a wonderful opportunity occur in the Northwest Region. Shane is a special little boy we have here in the Northwest Region. Shane has had an opportunity that most children can only dream about. Shane was selected to take part in an event with the Kansas City Chiefs in October. Shane took part in a pie-eating contest against several of the team members, including Chiefs lineman Jordan Black. Shane also loved the time that he had with them and took full advantage to have them sign autographs on several of the Chiefs items that he has. This day has been most memorable to him as he has yet to have a home to call his own. Shane is an eleven-year-old boy, with strawberry blonde hair, fair complexion and abundance of freckles. Shane is legally free for adoption. Shane loves to talk to those who have an interest in him. He enjoys sports and would love the opportunity to play in an organized league. He has been actively involved in horseback riding, which will resume again when the weather warms up. This was an activity that he looked forward to each and every week. Shane also has an avid love for John Deere tractors. Shane wants to be adopted and frequently asks his case manager and adoption worker if they have found any families for him yet. Please do not let this special event that Shane was able to attend remain his most memorable. If you would like to know more about Shane please contact: Tasha Rogers, SSWII, Placement Resource Worker, Livingston County Children's Division, 601 West Mohawk, Suite B, Chillicothe, MO 64601, 660-646-5770, [Tasha.R.Rogers@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Tasha.R.Rogers@dss.mo.gov).

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## Southwest Region (Area Four)

3rd Annual Family Connections Adoption Fair

10am - 2pm, June 5, 2004

Praise Assembly  
3535 North Glenstone, Springfield, Missouri  
Please contact Lori at (417) 895-7868 for more information.

- On November 6 Greene County hosted a profile party for adoptive and foster parents.
- On November 20 a Linking Hearts event was held at Fort Leonard Wood where perspective adoptive families could view profiles.

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## Area 6 Updates

submitted by Angie Sample, SSSI, and Foster Parent R/T/S Unit

\* Our partnership with "Helping Hands, Healing Hearts" resulted in a wonderful holiday party for foster children from St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and Jefferson County on 12/13/03 at St. Louis University. Phyllis Jones, founder of the organization, worked tirelessly to assure that about 1,000 children were served at the party. Each foster child referred to the party that was in attendance, received lunch (pizza, cookies, punch), pictures with Santa, lots of fun activities, and a large bag of gifts (wish list items and an outfit). Many children received bicycles and other wonderful surprises. Ms. Jones and friends work year round to help our children by collecting toys for this annual party. The foundation also maintains a large clothing warehouse, where case managers may make requests for free clothing, shoes, underwear, etc. (some new, some gently used) for the children in their caseloads any time of the year. Thank you "Helping Hands, Healing Hearts" for everything you do for our children!

\*People of Faith for Foster Care, another wonderful community partner, sponsored their annual Warming Tree giveaway again this December. For the event area churches and friends collected hundreds of hats, gloves, scarves, mittens and coats (mostly new, some gently used) for city foster children to keep them warm through the winter months.

*Continued on next page*

Continued from page four

\* St. Louis City Family Court conducted a Foster Family Night at Court in early February where foster parents were invited to come to the court building and learn about court hearings, procedures, roles of each participant, CASA, etc. Information was shared regarding the city's new open court policy (effective February 1, 2004) and how it might affect foster parents and the children in their homes.

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## Area Seven

We met to celebrate the successful Adoption Saturday event of November 22, 2003. Thirty-nine families were made permanent by St. Louis County Judges. Each child received a Teddy bear donated by "Good Bears of the World" a special thanks to George Weber, St. Louis's Chair Bear. Balloons (delivered by our balloon princess Enita Jones) and lots of food finished out the day.

A special thank you and farewell ceremony was held honoring Retiring Judge Susan Block.

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## My name is Kerri Roy.

I am an adoption specialist with Jackson County Missouri Children's Division. I have worked with the Division for 3 and 1/2 years and have been an adoption specialist for 2 years.

Success story:

I received a case this summer of a seventeen year old boy that had been in foster care since 1998. He came in due to sexual abuse by his father, grandfather and brother. He moved three times the first month that he was in care and ended up in a residential facility, where he remained for two years. After being discharged from that facility he went to a foster home and within in a month was placed back into residential. He was able to go to another foster home about a month later and then left that foster home a few months later and went to another home. He remained in that home for about two months, before he was back in a residential facility. While in this facility he befriended a minister, who introduced him to a gentlemen in his church that was interested in being a mentor. This gentleman become his mentor and developed a wonderful relationship that less than a year later he became a foster parent and the child was moved in his home. The placement has worked out wonderfully and the 17 year old child was adopted in October 2003.

**REMEMBER**  
**March**  
**is**  
**National Foster Care**  
**Awareness Month**



### About Sandra

Sandra (she likes to be called Sandy) is a very sweet young lady with short light golden brown hair. She has beautiful bright blue eyes. Sandra is extremely outgoing and loves to meet new people.

Sandra is in good physical health. She wears glasses. She takes Zyrtec for allergies.

Sandra has two older half brothers (they have the same mother). One is 17 years old and lives with his father, and one is 18 and has been emancipated, so he lives independently. Sandra also has a younger sister, who has already been adopted. She and Sandra talk on the phone once monthly and get to occasionally visit with each other.

Sandra needs a stable, supportive and loving home to care for her unconditionally. She requires a parent that will be a good role model of appropriate behavior and social skills. Sandra requires structure and guidance to encourage her growth. She also needs consistency and positive reinforcement to improve her self image. She would like to remain in close contact with her sister.

# PARTNERSHIP, ASSOCIATION & COALITION NEWS



## Missouri Foster Care and Adoption Association

The MFCAA was established in 1972 by a group of loving and caring foster and adoptive parents as

the State Association for Missouri. Since our conception there have been many changes in the foster and adoptive care system. We have seen many steps forward and many back. Still our purpose has remained the same: to better the lives of our foster and adoptive families by bringing them together creating an atmosphere of cooperative assessment, continued education, and informed planning are continuous components of our efforts to better meet the needs of adoptive and foster children and their families.

In keeping with our purpose, our second state convention will be held on June 17, 18, & 19, 2004 at the Settle Inn in Branson, Mo. We hope to have all 15 hours of the required yearly training approved for this three-day event. Our first convention went over so well that we are planning a bigger one this year. Our special room rate for this event will be \$49.00 a night for a standard room and \$95.00 a night for a theme room. The convention cost will be \$50.00 for MFCAA members and \$75.00 for non-members. Our annual dues are only \$15.00 for individual or family or \$25.00 for a chapter or an agency. The convention cost includes the banquet dinner, which last year was outstanding.

For more information contact Jan Eagleburger at 1-417-862-8081 or Jim McKenna at 1-417-538-4362. We will have more information for the next family connections.



## Fulfilling Dreams for a "Forever Family" of Area Youth in Foster Care

*"I really want a special family."* ~Project Teen Plus Youth

Project Teen Plus is a program of the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition, whose mission is to create permanency in every foster child's life by recruiting and supporting foster/adoptive homes in the St. Louis Metropolitan community.

As a result of the success of last year's Project Teen, the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition received another year of much needed funding from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

Project Teen Plus' mission is to work in conjunction with the Children's Division and other professionals involved in permanency planning to expedite the successful adoption of youths in the foster care system, utilizing a child-specific recruitment method. Over 3,131 Missouri children are waiting to be adopted. A majority of the children waiting for permanent homes are between the ages of 10 and 15, which coincides with the age criteria for youth in the project (ages 10-17).

Project Teen Plus is a teen driven program. The youth participate in each step of the journey in securing a "forever family." Project Teen Plus empowers the youth to be key decision makers in choosing a family, which contributes to successful placements. The Project's support group for youth, individual family development services, and access to post adoption resources and community supports aid in the successful adoption of teens.

Project Teen Plus is dedicated to securing permanent, nurturing homes for 20 outstanding youth. As is true for the many children waiting for adoption, the youth in Project Teen Plus are intelligent, motivated, insightful, and are anxiously waiting to be a part of a FOREVER FAMILY.

For more information about Project Teen Plus youth waiting for an adoptive home, please contact Sheila Suderwalla at [sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org](mailto:sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org), 800-FOSTER-3 or 314-340-7785. Other waiting children are featured on our website, [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org). To view, click on "Waiting Children."



## Our Communities - Our Children

Family to Family is a neighborhood based and family focused approach to foster care and support for children and families. Children's Division - St. Louis City is currently in our second year of implementing Family to Family. The focus of this practice is better outcomes for children by:

- ☐ Reducing the number and rate of children placed away from birth families.
- ☐ Increasing the number & rate of foster children placed in their own neighborhoods.
- ☐ Decreasing lengths of stay of children in placement
- ☐ Increasing the number and rate of children reunified with birth families.
- ☐ Decreasing the number and rate of children re-entering placement and placement moves children in care experience.
- ☐ Increasing the number and rate of siblings placed together.
- ☐ Reducing any disparities associated with race/ethnicity, gender, or age in these outcomes.

The focus of this article is **Team Decision-Making**, which is one of the four key strategies of Family to Family. The other key strategies are:

- ☐ **Recruiting, training, and supporting resource families**: finding and maintaining foster and adoptive families who can support children and families in their own neighborhoods.
- ☐ **Building Community Partnerships**: Establishing relationships with a wide range of community organizations in neighborhoods where referral rates to the child welfare system are high and collaborate to create an environment that supports families involved in the child welfare system
- ☐ **Self-evaluation**: Using teams to collect, analyze, and interpret hard data about child and family outcomes to find out where we are making progress and to determine where we need to make changes in policy and practice.

**Team Decision-Making** is the process of involving foster and/or adoptive parents, caseworkers, and birth families in all placement decisions to ensure a network of support for the children and the adults who care for them. There are three types of these meetings. The first meeting occurs at the pre-placement phase and the focus is to prevent the placement of children, or if an emergency placement occurs, a meeting is held immediately to discuss if the placement will change. This first phase began in August of 2003 and has been quite successful in ensuring children are in the most least restrictive placements possible.

The second type of meeting occurs when there is a possibility of a placement being disrupted. All parties come together to discuss how to ensure the resource family has the needed support to preserve the placement. This second phase will begin in the spring of 2004. The third type of meeting occurs when a case reaches the point of reunification. The focus of this meeting is to ensure that all of the appropriate supports are in place to assist the family with a successful reunification.

We currently have three team decision-making facilitators, two more will be trained during the month of January, and we have three back-up facilitators. If you are interested in receiving an orientation on the Team Decision-Making process, please contact Joan Garrison (Social Service Supervisor III) at 314-877-2326. If you are interested in learning more about Family to Family, please contact the Coordinator Leslie Mar'Na at 314-340-7939.



### About April

Would you like to help a shy young lady grow into a beautiful young woman? April is a shy, delightful young lady. She has an interest in computers, animals, and photography. April hopes to become either a veterinarian or botanist when she grows up. She likes to spend time by herself reading or doing jigsaw puzzles. April benefits from positive feedback to help build her self-confidence. April is working on overcoming her shyness and developing interpersonal skills.

April is legally free for adoption. She would like to be in a family that provides her with the opportunity to care for animals. She is currently living in a small community and enjoys this environment very much. She would benefit from a strong female role model to help her continue building her self esteem.

# LEGISLATION

## Keeping Legislative Watch

## Missouri Government

### Bills introduced in the Missouri House (HB) and Senate (SB) as of January 23, 2004

- HB 846:** Purgason - Modifies the granting of child custody and visitation when a parent is a sexual offender.
- HB 929:** Bivins - Raises victims ages in several sexual offense statutes and makes defendant's previous sexual offenses charged or uncharged admissible unless judge determine that they are too prejudicial.
- HB 1032:** Cooper - Removes the cap on the special needs adoption tax credit and changes the administration of the tax credit to the children's Division within the Department of Social Services.
- HB 1139:** Viebrock - Revises laws governing tax credits for adoption of children
- HB 1154:** Sanders/Brooks - Prohibits public or charter school employees from performing a strip search of any student of such schools.
- SB 745:** Dougherty - Omnibus bill that modifies various provisions regarding foster care and protective services for children.
- SB 762:** Champion - Modifies various provisions relating to foster care and protective services for children
- SB 803:** Gross - Enables the Children's Division to meet with children in school unless the abuse is alleged to have occurred there.
- SB 806:** Loudon - Removes the aggregate cap for the adoption tax credit program
- SB 816:** Dougherty - Allows foster children to receive a tuition and fee waiver to state-funded colleges or universities
- SB 864:** Dougherty - Creates a tax credit for lead abatement and a dollar check-off for the Childhood Lead Testing Fund.
- SB 914:** Dougherty - Increases the foster care reimbursement and the adoption subsidy rates over a four-year period
- SB 1018:** Champion - Relating to children placed in protective custody

### Legislation Extends ASFA-created Adoption Incentive Program

The Senate passed the House version of the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003. The legislation extends the program for another five years focusing greater attention on finding adoptive families for older children in foster care. The bill authorizes \$43 million a year in performance-based incentives to states successful in increasing the number of children adopted from foster care. The bonus program, has contributed to the substantial increase in adoptions in recent years—from 31,000 in f/y 1997 to approximately 51,000 in f/y 2002.

Despite the recent progress many more children are in need of adoptive families. At the end of f/y 2002, 532,698 children remain in foster care, and 116,653 of these children had adoption as their permanent placement goal. About half of the children waiting to be adopted are over the age of nine. A child over the age of nine is more likely to remain in foster care through his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday than to find an adoptive family.

The Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 is intended to change that statistic by encouraging states to focus greater effort on finding adoptive families for children nine and older. The Adoption Incentive Program will now include a targeted bonus for states successful in increasing the number of older children adopted from foster care, as well as continue to recognize overall progress in increasing adoption from foster care.

### Fighting SIDS and FAS

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) is offering two measures to fund research into Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Both conditions are common among children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. SIDS is also a particular problem among Native Americans in Daschle's home state and across the country, as noted by the Senator. Daschle's measures, which would be amendments to the Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill, would provide \$5 million for grants directly by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address SIDS risk factors and double FAS funding at HHS to \$46 million. Meanwhile, CDC reported that better control over SIDS has been largely responsible for the U.S. infant mortality rate dropping to another record low in 2001, or only 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births. Contact Daschle's office, (202)224-2321 or [tom\\_Daschle.senate.gov](mailto:tom_Daschle.senate.gov).

### First-in-the-Nation State Law Targets Foster Parents Who Smoke

Policies restricting foster parents' smoking are common enough across the country but Maine is the first state to put the policy into law.

A majority of states already impose restrictions on foster parents' smoking and other habits that may affect foster children's wellbeing. Such policies are particularly important if children have special health needs. Maine's Department of Human Services supported the idea, said State Rep. Marie Laverriere-Boucher, who sponsored the bill that was just signed into law. A "grandfather" clause gives time and support to quit to foster parents who smoke.

## Federal Government



# Support Groups Training Opportunities

## Alliance for S.A.F.E. 2004 Meeting Schedule

April, 20; May, 18; June, 15; July, 20; September, 21; October, 19; November, 16  
Call Diana Jones, LFCS 314-754-2747

### FREE ADOPTION FINANCING SEMINAR

Wednesday, January 21, at 7pm at A.G. Edwards in Chesterfield.

As a reminder, this seminar discusses how the tax credits work, how to budget, and how to financially plan for an adoption. This is also a great forum for prospective adoptive parents to ask other questions of me regarding travel, the process, adjustments to family life, etc.

Since the response was tremendously positive for the first seminar (22 attendees). I have decided to conduct this seminar the 3rd Wednesday of every month, rather than every other month as originally planned. As in the past, I will e-mail a similar invitation at the beginning of each month.

Future Seminars are planned for:

February 18, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16  
July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20  
November 17, December 15

Seating for each seminar is limited to 20, RSVP to:

Charles G. Grbcich, MBA, AAMS  
A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc.  
Financial Consultant  
14567 North Outer Forty Drive  
Chesterfield, MO 63017  
(636) 530-3424 Direct (800) 866-2801 Toll Free



The Adoption Exchange's PARTNER Program  
*Presents:*

Adoption Support Group Training & Meeting for veteran, new and prospective adoptive parents!

Every 2nd Thursday monthly  
Dinner will be served  
Childcare is available

To find out more information about this support group training and meeting in the St. Louis Metro area, please contact LaRhonda Wilson (314) 367-3343 or email at [larhonda@adoptex.org](mailto:larhonda@adoptex.org).



### About Fernando

Fernando is a slim, attractive boy with short dark hair, brown eyes, and a captivating smile and personality. He is bright, creative, and inquisitive. He is most comfortable engaging in one on one activities or when he is in small groups. Fernando presents himself as being very independent. He is extremely bright and is fascinating to have a conversation with. At times he amazes adults with his ability to analyze a situation. He enjoys and thrives on being the center of attention. He enjoys sharing affection through hugs and drawing pictures. He likes computers, video games, legos, and puzzles. He prefers indoor activities. Fernando likes attending church and singing in the choir.

Fernando is in the third grade. He enjoys reading and does well when reading out loud. He is an intelligent child and does well in school.

Fernando is legally free for adoption. He is the second oldest of a large sibling group and maintains frequent contact with an older sister. He needs a family that will help him meet his fullest potential. Fernando will open his heart to a family that is patient, compassionate, and committed to him through his short comings and his successes.

# FOSTER AND ADOPTION RESOURCES

## READY, SET, FLY!

Are you the foster parent or caseworker of a youth age 14 or older? Would you like to know more about how to help your teenager get ready to become an adult? Here is your opportunity to get in-service training hours and learn a lot of great information! The Children's Division Staff Training and Development, in collaboration with the Independent Living Program staff, have developed an in-service training curriculum based upon the Casey Family Program "Ready, Set, Fly!" A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills. This training will be made available to all foster homes, staff, and alternate placement providers including residential treatment workers and transitional living program contractors in order to better assist in teaching youth practical, everyday living skills. The training, in conjunction with the *Ready, Set, Fly!* Guidebook will provide hands-on, tangible activities to use in conjunction with the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and Life Skills Training classes. Attending the *Ready, Set, Fly!* training will provide five (5) in-service training hours and will be conducted in your local area. If you are interested in receiving more information or signing up for this training, please contact your teenager's case manager or your local ILP specialist today.

## Foster Care Advisory Board

### Your Voice . . . Make the Choice to Participate!

Did you know that you have a local foster care advisory board, as well as a state committee that meets to address the various issues faced by foster families? If not, you probably are not alone. The committee decided at its December quarterly meeting to make an effort to raise awareness in the foster care community of the group's existence, as well as the work being done on behalf of foster families. This article, and articles in future editions of *Family Connection*, is just one way the committee hopes to accomplish that goal.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Foster Care Advisory Committee, here is some information to bring you up to date:

- The mission of the board is to "maintain and improve the quality of life for foster children and foster families by improving the relationship between the agency and foster families through communicating with the agency the needs that we experience and suggestions for improvement."
- The state committee meets quarterly in Jefferson City and is made up of locally elected foster parents, Children's Division staff, and foster parent associations.
- Each area runs their own foster care advisory board which tries to resolve foster parent issues at the local level. The representative to the quarterly state meeting brings concerns that cannot be addressed locally.
- Past accomplishments of the State Foster Care Advisory Committee include: direct deposit of reimbursement, the diaper allowance, and foster parent photo ID cards.
- In addition to addressing issues brought by the local boards, the state committee's current focus is to improve two specific areas impacting foster families; 1) maneuvering through the "system" and 2) training for foster parents and staff.

Some area boards have reported difficulty in getting foster parents to participate. Conversely, foster parents have shared that they have not participated because they saw little action. The state committee has made a commitment to be more accountable to its mission and to share their action plan in each *Family Connection*. In turn, we ask that foster parents get involved in their area boards. Below is a listing of the contact person for your board. The foster parent associations are provided to you as additional resources.

### Contacts for Local Advisory Boards

**NW Region (Area 1):** Kris Ross 660-886-5469; [hdross@murlin.com](mailto:hdross@murlin.com)

**NE Region (Area 2):** Diane Bueneman 636-928-2198; [fisherofthelake@yahoo.com](mailto:fisherofthelake@yahoo.com)

**SE Region (Area 3):** Joanie Lowery 573-996-7534; [joanielowery@yahoo.com](mailto:joanielowery@yahoo.com)

**SW Region (Area 4):** Robin Butts 417-581-6475; robinlbutts@yahoo.com  
**KC Region (Area 5):** Dorothy Patterson 816-313-7633; dpatterson06@aol.com  
**St. Louis Region/St. Louis City (Area 6):** Rene Murph 314-869-9429; murphr@webster.edu  
**St. Louis Region/St. Louis County (Area 7):** Geri Brotherton 314-739-7233; brosl0@peoplepc.com

### Contacts for Participating Foster Parent Associations

**Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association:** Jim McKenna 417-538-4362; d.j.jim@inter-linc.net  
**Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association:** Lori Ross/Michelle Winberry 816-350-0215; mfcaa@mail.com  
**Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition:** Denise Kelley 314-340-3493; denisekelley@foster-adopt.org

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### **Current Action Taken by State Foster Parent Advisory Committee**

**Identified Need:** Change of respite policy to better serve individual needs of children  
**Submitted by:** Area 2 Foster Parent Advisory Board  
**Action Taken:** Proposed policy change submitted at December 2003 quarterly state meeting; committee discussed, made modifications, and passed it on to Children's Division State Office staff for approval  
**Status:** Change pending approval by Children's Division

**\*\*Look for progress updates in next quarter's edition of *Family Connections*.\*\***

## **USDA Scholarship Program**

While the USDA's scholarship program is for the Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions there is no "race" requirement for these scholarships. The schools include Florida A&M and Kentucky State University, this is a great chance for full tuition, room & boards and books, etc. New scholarships are available every year. Visit <http://1890scholars.program.usda.gov/elig.html>

Thirty-four or more scholarships are awarded annually and must be used at one of the seventeen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions. Each award provides annual tuition, employment, employee benefits, use of a personal computer and software while on scholarship, fees, books, room and board for each of the 4 academic years. Each annual scholarship renewal is contingent upon satisfactory performance and normal progress toward the bachelor's degree. Upon completion of the scholar's academic degree program, there is an obligation of 1 year of service to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for each year of financial support.

### **Eligibility**

Applicants must be U.S. citizens who have a high school diploma or a G.E.D. certificate and are starting their first year of college for a bachelor's degree. (Note: currently enrolled students in these institutions are not eligible to apply.)

Applicant must:  
 -Be a U.S. citizen

cont page 12



### **About Shanice**

Shanice is an attractive girl who is looking for a permanent home. She has a captivating smile and personality. She is delightful and imaginative. She is active and creative and enjoys being involved. Her foster mother reports she is a happy child.

Shanice enjoys being the center of attention. She is a child that enjoys physical comforting and displays of affection. She strives to be in the popular crowd at school to boost her own self esteem. She participates in church camp, 4-H camps, softball and the Boys and Girls Club. She is in the sixth grade. She does well in school. Shanice is a legal risk adoptive placement. She is a child that will open her heart to a family that is supportive, compassionate, and committed to her through her shortcomings and successes. She would do well in either a single parent or two parent family where she is the youngest child.

The Adoption Exchange  
100 North Euclid Ave., Suite 504  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

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*Cont. from page 11*

- Be an entering freshman
- Hold a high school diploma or G.E.D. certificate
- Have a high school GPA of 3.0 or better
- Have a combined verbal/math score of 1,000 or more on the SAT or composite score of 21 or more on the ACT
- Attend one of the seventeen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions
- Study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or other related disciplines
- Demonstrate leadership and community service
- Apply for admission to the institution(s) of his or her choice
- Submit an official transcript with the school seal and an authorized official's signature
- Sign all applications (original signature only)

All application materials must be postmarked no later than January 15 and sent to the institution(s) selected by the applicant to attend.

This is a listing of the Colleges that they must attend:

Alcorn State Univ., Lorman, MS	Delaware State University	Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL
Fort Valley St. Univ., Fort Valley, GA	Kentucky State University, Frankfort, KY	Langston University, Langston, OK
Lincoln Univ., Jefferson City, MO	N. Carolina A&T Univ., Greensboro, NC	Prairie View A&M Univ., Prairie View, TX
S. Carolina State Univ., Orangeburg, SC	Southern Univ., Baton Rouge, LA	Tennessee State Univ., Nashville, TN
Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL	University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff, AR	Univ. of Maryland-Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, MD
Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA	West Virginia State College, Institute, WV	